

March 17, 2015

Testimony of Joseph McGee, Vice President, The Business Council of Fairfield County re Raised Bill # 1090, An Act Concerning Gaming

Good afternoon, Chairmen Larson and Dargan and Members of the Committee.

The Business Council of Fairfield County questions the value of expanding Casino gambling in Connecticut.

The argument that we must save the two casinos in Eastern Connecticut from the consequence of the expansion of casinos in other states by expanding casinos in Connecticut from the current two to a future of five raises serious questions that requires a detailed economic analysis.

The economic argument made in the 1990's in support of the casinos in Eastern Connecticut was that with the loss of defense jobs the casinos would provide jobs to a part of Connecticut hard hit with defense cutbacks. In fact, thousands of jobs were created. Fast forward to 2015, employment in the casinos has taken a significant hit from regional competition and the answer is to create new casinos in western and northern Connecticut which will further exacerbate employment loss in Eastern Connecticut towns which have grown dependent on casino jobs. How does this help eastern Connecticut? **IT MAY HELP THE BOTTOM LINE OF THE TWO CASINOS WHO WILL SHARE IN THE REVENUE OF THE 3 NEW CASINOS BUT HOW DOES THAT MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT?**

The impact of casino expansion on the towns surrounding the 3 communities selected needs to be fully understood.

A fundamental question needs to be addressed before we move forward. What is the case for this solution. Three small casinos will somehow compete with the glitz and glamour of the mega casinos planned in Massachusetts and New York? If they don't, what's next?

This legislation proposed a major expansion of gambling in our State with significant impacts on our transportation system, water and

sewerage systems labor supply and regional economies. Such a decision cannot simply be based on a short term desire to bolster an industry shrinking from regional competitive pressures. This proposal demands a major analysis of the economics of this industry and the value of the solution presented to an industry undergoing rapid change.

Thank you